



September 17, 2018

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, District of Columbia 20554

*RE: Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment, WC Docket No. 17-84; Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment, WT Docket No. 17-79*

Dear Ms. Dortch,

The City of Mount Vernon, Washington writes to express its concerns about the Federal Communications Commission's proposed Declaratory Ruling and Third Report and Order regarding state and local governance of small cell wireless infrastructure deployment.

While we appreciate the Commission's efforts to engage with local governments on this issue and share the Commission's goal of ensuring the growth of cutting-edge broadband services for all Americans, we remain deeply concerned about several provisions of this proposal. **Local governments have an important responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents, and we are concerned that these preemption measures compromise our City and expose wireless infrastructure providers to unnecessary liability.**

- **The FCC's proposed new collocation shot clock category is too extreme.** The proposal designates any preexisting structure, regardless of its design or suitability for attaching wireless equipment, as eligible for this new expedited 60 day shot clock. When paired with the FCC's previous decision exempting small wireless facilities from federal historic and environmental review, this places an unreasonable burden on local governments to prevent historic preservation, environmental, or safety harms to the community. Our staff reviews many many permits each year in a fair and reasonable manner. For the FCC to impose this extreme shot clock it basically gives the middle finger to other builders and development who would need to wait for their work while telecom jumps the line. An alternative is for telecom to pay an expedited fee to allow the City to hire extra staff to complete the work, which is a program we already have in place for any development who asks for expedited service.
  - The addition of up to three cubic feet of antenna and 28 cubic feet of additional equipment to a structure not originally designed to carry that equipment is substantial and may necessitate more review than the FCC has allowed in its proposal. I'm not sure what insurance company would cover injury to persons from failing poles and equipment without proof that the telecom has done its due diligence on the structure it places equipment on.

- **The FCC's proposed definition of "effective prohibition" is overly broad.** The draft report and order proposes a definition of "effective prohibition" that invites challenges to long-standing local rights of way requirements unless they meet a subjective and unclear set of guidelines. While the Commission may have intended to preserve local review, this framing and definition of effective prohibition opens local governments to the likelihood of more, not less, conflict and litigation over requirements for aesthetics, spacing, and undergrounding.
- **The FCC's proposed recurring fee structure is an unreasonable overreach that will harm local policy innovation.** We disagree with the FCC's interpretation of "fair and reasonable compensation" as meaning approximately \$270 per small cell site. Local governments share the federal government's goal of ensuring affordable broadband access for every American, regardless of their income level or address. That is why many cities have worked to negotiate fair deals with wireless providers, which may exceed that number or provide additional benefits to the community. Additionally, the Commission has moved away from rate regulation in recent years. Why does it see fit to so narrowly dictate the rates charged by municipalities?

The City of Mount Vernon has worked in good faith with private business to build the best broadband infrastructure possible for our residents. We oppose this effort to restrict local authority and stymie local innovation, while limiting the obligations providers have to our community. We urge you to oppose this declaratory ruling and report and order.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill Boudreau  
Mayor